

Chapter 3: A Wedding in Brownsville

NCERT · Class 12 · English · Kaleidoscope · Short Stories

Questions

Question 1

What do you understand of Dr Margolin's past? How does it affect his present life?

Solution

Answer. Dr Margolin's past was a blend of recognition and sadness. As a child, he was lauded as a prodigy. He always felt he was a failure. Everyone in their home town assumed he would grow up to be a genius in his childhood days, but he faced difficulties. The loss of his true love, Raizel, affected his mental health, and he lost complete faith in humanity. His family had been tortured, burned and gassed. He also suffered from fear of death. All these incidents shaped Dr Margolin's existing state of mind. However, on the professional front, he was successful and had a promising career. He had an office in West End Avenue and wealthy patients. He was highly regarded and respected by his close associates and everyone else.

Question 2

What was Dr Margolin's attitude towards his profession?

Solution

Answer. Dr Margolin was very dedicated to his profession. He never broke his oath and was always respectful of his patients. He was very successful in his professional field. People around him held him in high esteem. He treated rabbis, refugees and Jewish writers without a penny and even though he had wealthy patients, he also supplied them with hospital beds and medicines if required.

Question 3

What is Dr Margolin's view of the kind of life the American Jewish community leads?

Solution

Answer. Dr Margolin did not accept nor appreciate the kind of life the American Jewish community led. Jewish laws and customs were utterly distorted, according to him. He did not like their celebrations, and he felt annoyed and irritated. Those who had no regard for Jewishness wore skullcaps. He disliked Anglicised Yiddish, the Yiddishised English, the ear-splitting music and the unruly way of dance. He felt ashamed and did not like taking his wife to a wedding or any such gatherings.

Question 4

What were the personality traits that endeared Dr Margolin to others in his community?

Solution

Answer. Dr Margolin, son of a poor teacher of Talmud, was a self-taught man. In his childhood days, he was lauded as a prodigy. He studied Talmud and commentaries independently and could recite long passages of the Bible by himself. He also learnt algebra and geometry by himself. At the age of seventeen, he attempted a translation that led him to be considered a genius.

Question 5

Why do you think Dr Margolin had the curious experience at the wedding hall?

Solution

Answer. All the curious experiences at the wedding hall were due to his death. On the wedding day, Dr Margolin met with an accident on the way to the wedding hall and died. He could probably explain his strange meeting with Raizel through his past. Dr Margolin's one true love was Raizel, whom he had loved for life, but he never had an opportunity to marry her. She married away to someone else and was later killed by the Nazis.

6. Was the encounter with Raizel an illusion or was the carousing at the wedding-hall illusory? Was Dr Margolin the victim of the accident and was his astral body hovering in the world of

Twilight?

Answer. Yes, the carousing at the wedding hall was illusionary. Dr Margolin met with an accident on the way to the wedding hall and was the victim of the accident. Raizel, who the Nazis shot, was dead for a

long time now, and Dr Margolin could see her because of his death. His astral body was hovering in the twilight world. Both were missing their physical appearance, and in fact, were in spiritual forms.

Appreciation

Question 1

Surrealism was an artistic and literary movement in France between the two World Wars. Its basic idea is that the automatic, illogical and uncontrolled associations of the mind represent a higher reality than the world of practical life and ordinary literature. Do you think this story could be loosely classified as surrealist? What elements in this story would support the idea?

Solution

Answer. Yes, it is a surrealist story. The ending of the story is apparent in that it is an element of surrealism. On the wedding day, Dr Margolin met with an accident and died on the way to the wedding hall and had lost his bodily appearance. Yet the story tells us of Dr Margolin participating in the wedding where he is eating, dancing, drinking, chatting with guests, etc. His encounter with his true love Raizel, who the Nazis shot, also stands out as surrealist.

Question 2

Comment on the technique used by the author to convey the gruesome realities of the war and its devastating effect on the psyche of human beings through an intense personal experience.

Solution

Answer. At the wedding, the author uses the conversation technique between the guests to portray the gruesome realities of the war. At the party, Dr Margolin and other people are conversing with each other about the deaths in their family and the destruction of their community. Through this, the author conveys the talks of the realities of the war among people in a conversational tone, which makes it sound realistic and believable to the readers.

Stop and Think

Question 1

Who were the Senciminers?

Solution

Answer. The Senciminers from the town of Sencimin were the native Jewish inhabitants. The Germans destroyed the city and were thrown out of the town forcefully. Many Senciminers were left tortured, burned and gassed, and very few survived and escaped to America from the camps.

Question 2

Why did Dr Margolin not particularly want his wife to accompany him to the wedding?

Solution

Answer. Whenever Dr Margolin took Gretl to a wedding or Bar Mitzvah, he felt ashamed. Even though she was born a Christian, Dr Margolin could see that American Judaism was a mess. At least this time, he would forgive himself for the trouble of making excuses to her. So, Dr Margolin does not particularly want his wife to accompany him to weddings or parties.

Stop and Think (2)

Question 1

What is the Hippocratic oath?

Solution

Answer. The Hippocratic Oath is an oath usually taken by a doctor to swear their commitment to their profession. Dr Margolin had never broken the promise, and he had always been honourable to the utmost, avoiding every kind of bias towards his patients. The protagonist, Dr Margolin, being a doctor himself, had his set of principles to follow.

Question 2

What topic does the merry banter at the wedding invariably lead to?

Solution

Answer. The merry banter at the wedding invariably led to the mentioning of the deaths of the Senciminers. The talks between the woman and Dr Margolin were eventually about the people who

died in the war. The protagonist discovered himself being involved in the conversation and was asked about the deaths of his family members.

Stop and Think (3)

Question 1

Who was the woman that Dr Margolin suddenly encountered at the wedding?

Solution

Answer. The woman Dr Margolin encountered at the wedding was his one true love, Raizel, the daughter of Melekh, the watchman. He loved her so much that he wanted to marry her, but he had no luck and couldn't marry her. The last time Dr Margolin heard of her was that she had married someone else and had children, who the Nazis later killed.

Question 2

What were the events that led to his confused state of mind?

Solution

Answer. Dr Margolin realised that something was wrong when he noticed that his wallet was missing from his shirt pocket and he was not sure how and where he had lost his wallet. He also couldn't understand that his true love, Raizel, being present at the wedding, looked too young, and he was in a dilemma that she might be her daughter, who was trying to mock him. All these events led Dr Margolin to a confused state of mind.
